

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1634

INFO USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7223

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, BL

SUBJ: BOLVIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: LA PAZ 7128

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE PRODUCT OF OUR ANALYSIS OF RECENT CHANGES IN THE DOMESTIC BOLIVIAN POLITICAL SITUATION AND OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT THESE CHANGES COULD HAVE ON U.S. POLICIES AND INTERESTS IN BOLIVIA OVER THE SHORT RUN

2. THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS UNSTABLE, BUT WITH IDENTIFIABLE ALTERNATIVES. AT THE MOMENT, THE MILITARY APPEAR TO BE SOLIDLY BEHIND BANZER'S DECISION TO ACHIEVE SOME BASIC ECONOMIC GOALS THROUGH RELIANCE ON A MORE TECHNICAL CABINET WITHOUT THE DISTRACTIONS AND COMPROMISES INHERENT IN HIS BEING A CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE. IF BANZER HAD BEEN ABLE TO DEVISE A MORE TECHNICALLY COMPETENT CABINET WITHOUT ALIENATING THE MNR, WE WOULD HAVE HAD NO HESITATION IN STATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUCCEEDED IN STRENGTHENING ITSELF AND ITS ABILITY TO GET THINGS DONE. WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE MNR, HOWEVER, THERE MAY BE SOMETHING OF AN OFFSET BETWEEN THE LOSS OF THE MNR

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POLITICAL BUFFER AND THE GAIN IN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE

BANZER REGIME. IN THAT SENSE, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE PROSPECTS OF THE PRESENT CABINET ACHIEVING THE GOALS OUTLINED BY PRESIDENT BANZER ARE NOT MUCH BETTER OR WORSE THAN THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDER THE PREVIOUS CABINET STRUCTURE.

3. OVER THE COURSE OF THE NXT FEW MONTHS, WE SEE THE PRESENT CABINET STRUCTURE AS BEING THE MOST LIKELY TO OBTAIN, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME MINOR INCREASE IN MILITARY PARTICIPATION. HOWEVER, WITH THE MNR IN OPPOSITION THERE IS ALSO THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING FRICTION BETWEEN THE GOB AND THE MNR, WHICH COULD LEAD TO A DEGREE OF REPRESSION AND IN TURN TO A MUCH GREATER ROLE FOR THE MILITARY IN THE GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE INTERNAL SECURITY. THIS INCREASED ROLE COULD TAKE THREE FORMS. FIRST, BANZER COULD NAME AN ALL-MILITARY CABINET; SECOND, ANOTHER SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER OR JUNTA COULD OUST BANZER, BUT CARRY OUT A SIMILAR PROGRAM WITH AN ALL-MILITARY OR MILITARY-TECHNICIAN CABINET; THIRD, A MILITARY OFFICER OR JUNTA REPRESENTING THE MIDDLE-GRADE OR SO-CALLED GENERATIONAL GROUP OF OFFICERS COULD OUST BANZER AND IMPOSE A REGIME ALONG THE LINES OF THE PERUVIAN MODEL. WE HAVE CONSIDERED AND DISCARDED THE POSSIBILITY OF A POPULAR REVOLT AGAINST THE PRESENT REGIME, OR OF A MILITARY COUP BACKED BY THE MNR OR ANY OTHER LEFT-WING CIVILIAN GROUP.

4. IN THE VIEW OF THE EMBASSY, NONE OF THE POSSIBILITIES MENTIONED ABOVE AS LIKELY WOULD WARRANT A REAPPRAISAL OF OUR RELATIONS

WITH THE GOB IN TERMS OF ON-GOING OR CONTEMPLATED COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS. WE BELIEVE A CORRECT, ROUTINELY CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY OF THESE GOVERNMENTS IS POSSIBLE AND, TOGETHER WITH A CONTINUATION OF OUR COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS ON THEIR OWN MERITS, WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE U.S. INTERESTS IN BOLIVIA. STEDMAN

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